

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **FAST Focuses on the Future of Freight in the Puget Sound Region**

Since the formation of FAST (Freight Action STrategy – Seattle-Tacoma-Everett) in 1996, the FAST program has been quite successful in implementing its Phase I and II projects. The partnership recently conducted workshops to take a fresh look at the FAST program and partnership.

The first program planning workshop in September 2003 brought together approximately 55 public and private sector participants to discuss the key issues and opportunities that face the FAST partnership. Participants included representatives from the Boeing Company, United Parcel Service, The Burlington-Northern Santa Fe Railroad, DHL-Airborne Express Air Cargo and the West Coast Trucking Association. The key issues and opportunities included:

### *International Issues*

**Puget Sound ports have lost 11.9% of foreign market share bound for the US since 1998.**

- ▶ Canadian railroads offer incentives that US railroads do not, making the Port of Vancouver very attractive for Midwest-bound freight.
- ▶ The Panama and Suez Canal improvements increase the competitiveness of East Coast ports.
- ▶ International shippers care about cost, reliability, and travel time for the total trip of their products, and choose routes that offer the best value for their customers.

### *National Issues*

**Moving freight efficiently into, through and around the Puget Sound region is critical to our national competitiveness.**

- ▶ Ports will need to increase capacity to accommodate larger ships and thus gain larger market share.
- ▶ Intermodal connections among marine, rail, truck and air need to become more reliable and efficient.
- ▶ The Northwest needs a less congested, more reliable, and more accessible transportation system. Fixing small bottlenecks in the Puget Sound region will not offer a significant reduction in travel time or increase reliability for freight bound for the Midwest.

### *Jobs, Exports, Business*

**Losing international and national market share hurts our economy.**

- ▶ The ports of Seattle and Tacoma create 12,300 direct transportation service jobs. The Port of Seattle generates 165,000 regional jobs.
- ▶ Nearly 1 in 3 Washington jobs relate to international trade.
- ▶ Local manufacturers and agriculture rely on the freight infrastructure for their exports.
- ▶ Shipping delays - at the ports, on the highways, at intermodal connections - hurt local and national businesses, including Boeing and UPS.
- ▶ Since moving their headquarters, Boeing has laid off 35,000 local workers.

### *Federal Program Changes*

**Proposed reauthorization of TEA-21 may severely limit the ability of FAST to compete successfully for federal funding.**

The second workshop was held in January 2004 and focused on the future strategic direction for the FAST program. The key objective of this workshop was to define what legislative strategy FAST should employ to deal with uncertainties related to declining federal funding and the lack of a dedicated state funding source for freight.

The outcome from the second FAST workshop identified both short-term (1-2 years) and long-term (more than two years) targets for the FAST program to focus on. The following are the key highlights for short- and long-term targets for the FAST program to focus on:

- Develop appropriations requests for federal fiscal-year 05 and 06 under a FAST corridor program request and for individual FAST projects under the FAST banner (short-term).
- Work towards the development of a dedicated state funding source for freight by conducting outreach and education at the state level (short-term).
- Advocate for the TEA-LU language in the final federal re-authorization proposal (short-term).
- The FAST partnership recommends the development of a freight element to include in the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) VISION 2030 update and the statewide Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) update (long term).
- Devise state communication and marketing strategy for freight issues and needs (long-term).

The FAST partnership has determined that the overall direction of the FAST corridor program should remain focused on project delivery and the completion of FAST Phase I and II projects. The FAST partnership recognizes that our previous successes in receiving federal funding for FAST projects probably will not continue in the future. Therefore there should be a concerted effort to focus on developing a dedicated funding source for freight and FAST projects at the state level.

The FAST Workshops Summary Report accompanies this Executive Summary. This report summarizes all of the key discussions, issues identified and the action steps to move FAST forward. The workshop meeting minutes are provided as an appendix to the FAST Workshop Summary Report.